

Message Text

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UNCLAS STRASBOURG 65

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SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN ALSACE

1. THE CHANGES IN THE ELECTORAL SCENE IN ALSACE MAY, AS IN MUCH OF EASTERN FRANCE, BE MORE REAL THAN APPARENT. THE UNITED LEFT IS EXPECTED SUBSTANTIALLY TO IMPROVE THE PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTES IT RECEIVES IN THE REGION. HOWEVER, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF SCHILTIGHEIM, AN INDUSTRIAL SUBURB OF STRASBOURG, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT IT WILL SUCCEED IN CAPTURING THE CITY HALL IN ANY OF THE FOUR CITIES OF THE AREA WHICH HAVE A POPULATION OF MORE THAN 30,000 AND WHERE THE VOTER CASTS HIS BALLOT FOR THE ENTIRE LIST. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS IN THESE LARGE URBAN CENTERS, STRASBOURG, SCHILTIGHEIM, COLMAR AND MULHOUSE WHERE THE LEFT IS EXPECTED TO MAKE ITS MOST SUBSTANTIAL GAINS TAKING POSSIBLY UP TO 40% OF THE VOTES CAST. IN STRASBOURG ALONE THIS WOULD REPRESENT A GAIN OF 22% OVER THE ELECTIONS OF 1971.

2. BECAUSE OF THE UPSURGE OF THE LEFT AND THE PROLIFERATION OF LISTS - 5 IN STRASBOURG AND MULHOUSE, 3 IN COLMAR, THE INCUMBENT MAYORS MAY BE FORCED TO WAIT UNTIL MARCH 20 FOR DEFINITIVE RESULTS BUT THEIR REELECTION IS NOT REALLY IN DOUBT.

3. PIERRE PFLIMLIN, FORMER PRIME MINISTER, FORCEFUL AND ARTICULATE SPOKESMAN FOR HIS CITY AND EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATOR
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WILL HAVE NO TROUBLE IN BEING REELECTED. THE LEFT, AFTER SOME ACRID INTERNAL DISPUTE BETWEEN ITS LEFT AND RIGHT WINGS FINALLY SETTLED ON ETIENNE TROCME, PRESIDENT OF STRASBOURG UNIVERSITY II AND PROFESSOR OF PROTESTANT THEOLOGY, AS ITS STANDARD BEARER. TROCME, ALTHOUGH AN EXCELLENT ADMINISTRATOR LACKS THE CHARISMA OF PFLIMLIN AND IS SO DISTANT FROM THE ACTIVIST LEFT WING OF HIS GROUP THAT HIS CHANCES ARE NOT GREAT.

IN FACT THE LEFT HERE BOASTS THAT TO PUT PFLIMLIN EN
BALLOTAGE WILL BE A VICTORY. GIVEN THE SUPPORT WHICH WILL
GO INITIALLY TO THE ECOLOGISTS AND OTHER SMALL GROUPS THIS
MIGHT HAPPEN, BUT PFLIMLIN S ELECTION IS NOT IN DOUBT.

4. IN MULHOUSE, SOCIAL-DEMOCRAT, EMILE MULLER APPEARS TO BE
IN NO DANGER. WHILE DISSIDENTS FROM THE PRESENT CITY COUNCIL
HAVE FORMED A RIVAL GROUP, MULLER IS SOLIDLY ENDORSED BY THE
MAJORITY AND HE STILL ATTRACTS MUCH OF THE LEFTIST VOTE OF
THE CITY. FURTHERMORE, THE LEFT IS ITSELF SPLIT WITH THE
FORMER SECRETARY OF PS IN THE HAUT-RHIN LEADING A SOCIALIST-
RADICAL DE GAUCHE TICKET AGAINST THE REGULAR PS-PC GROUP.
WHILE MULLER MAY BE FORCED INTO A SECOND ROUND, HIS GROUP DOES NOT
APPEAR TO BE IN DANGER.

5. LESS CERTAIN IS COLMAR WHERE 78YEAR OLD MAYOR JEAN REY
IS ANXIOUS TO COMPLETE 30YEARS AS MAYOR. REY, WHO HAS PROMISED
TO RETIRE AT THE END OF 1977, IS OPPOSED BY A LOCAL NOTABLE AND
RADICAL-SOCIALIST WHO WAS FORCED OFF THE INCUMBENT MAYOR S LIST.
THE LEFT, LED BY LOCAL ATTORNEY, IS UNITED AND HARD WORKING.
IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THE SOCIALISTS MADE STRIKING
GAINS IN THE AREA IN LAST YEARS CANTONAL ELECTIONS. AN UPSET
WHILE PROBABLY UNLIKELY WOULD NOT BE TOO SURPRISING.

6. SCHILTIGHEIM, WHERE RPR DEPUTY JEAN-CLAUDE BURCKEL WITH THE
INCUMBENT MAYOR AS HIS NUMBER TWO FACES SOCIALIST ALFRED
MULLER, A MEMBER OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, IS NEARLY A TOSS-UP.
BURCKEL, IN SPITE OF HIS RECOGNIZED QUALITIES AND VIGOR, LABORS
UNDER THE CONSIDERABLE DISADVANTAGE OF BEING A NON-RESIDENT OF
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THE TOWN, RUNNING AGAINST A WELL ESTABLISHED AND POPULAR NATIVE.
HE APPEARS TO BE THE UNDERDOG.ROMINE

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